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Hobart. 21st March 1892
Sunday night.

My dear Bird,

Do you remember that it is now more than three years since you left home. I think it was 9th March when you left Hobart, & 17th (ie 8 years last Wednesday) since the 'Imuna' sailed from Brisbane. Over three years solid work in the best studios ought to have made a lot of difference in your work. Which again reminds me that you have never yet sent us a single sketch or study - barring a sketch of your bluecoat Cousin. Don't you blush for yourself?

As usual I have not been able to begin my letter until late. McLeod Miss Oliver & her friend to tea, also Poppy Clarke, and Geo Waterhouse.

George & I sat a good part of the evening smoking & discussing University matters; then we went up to Stephens' to talk things over with him, and it was nearly 11 when I got back.

[Here an accident has occurred. I have knocked over & smashed a bottle of Schnapps & the room reeks with the odour thereof]

Your letter which arrived last week was satisfactory. You seem to have got the better of the influenza so far, and to be going on in the old way. I see you say you won't leave Paris until towards the end of May. If so the beginning of April will be time enough to write address to Mr. Maie's. It was pleasant for you to see Carrie & her husband. How long is his leave? They might be going out when you are ready to leave, & they might possibly go by Italy. The two Miss Fosters are going home in a week or two, after their brother is married. I will try to find out

something about their plans. They
are sure to be wandering about.
Gordon Allport left on ^{Monday} Tuesday
by the Orient St. 'Orizaba'.
She takes this mail, so this letter
will reach you just after his
arrival. He is going to finish
his terms & be called to the bar,
then he will go into some barrister's
Chambers to learn the practical
part, and expects to be back
here in about 18 mos. I think
Tom Steele has been helping him
with funds (this is confidential)
Of course we saw the Steeles when
in town. They both looked flourishing.
Couldnt you write a line to Mrs
Steele - also to Mrs Loureins? If
you don't know the latter's address,
enclose it to me.

I heard the other day that the
Colliers were very badly off. They live
in the old house again & are taking
in lodgers. Mrs B. is in the country.
I think she shirks the disagreeable

as much as she can, and that
going their dowel, Jim, is a drag
on them.

Old Lodge this wife went home
by the 'Orizaba' for a brief trip.
He asked for your address, which
I gave him. He is a good old fellow,
& Father had a great belief in him.
If you get a chance give him a
note to old Bowwick. The old
man would be delighted to see him.
They are both enthusiastic teetotallers.

George Walch is an unlucky fellow.
Last Sunday as he was going along
the road with Fred Dyke he saw
some gunpowder on the ground
which had been spilt by Jim Dyke
out of a parcel he was carrying.
George stooped down to put a match
to it, as he thought it might do
damage if left. The powder exploded
in his face & burnt him fearfully.
He put his hands up to his face &
the skin came off on his hands.
He has been very bad, but his
sight doesn't seem to be injured.
They can't tell yet whether his

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2/ face will be disfigured. It is most unlucky, but really if a fellow will stoop down & put a match to powder he must expect to be burnt. Robert & the rest of them (Kathie, Sean, & Theodore) are still at the East Coast.

Things are very bad here in trade, & I fear they will be worse before they are better. But the other colonies are worse, if that is any consolation. Melbourne is in a terrible state, & Brisbane is worse. A bank has failed in Melbourne & another in Adelaide. The latter is the Bank of Australia which has been taken over by the Union Bank. The & Co affairs are a long time getting settled. They don't know whether it will be necessary to make a call on the Shareholders. It will be hard on the Clarks if they do. In spite of the bad times we have been very busy.

The year so far has been very
Satisfactory; certainly we have
had no idle time. I have been
greatly relieved by the collapse
of the case against Pearce, the
Chairman of Directors of the Wk
Bank. The man who brought the
action has withdrawn it, & paid
my clients' costs. He found that
he had no case & couldn't hope
to succeed, so like a wise man
he withdrew.

I am going to look up the history
of the Tasmanian Blacks. I find
~~everywhere~~ the most outrageous
stories are repeated of the frightful
Cruelties practised on the aborigines
of Tasmania. There is no doubt
that they were often shamefully
treated, but there is a lot to be
said on both sides, & there is no
doubt that the conduct of the
Colonists has been grossly exaggerated.
I think our friend Bowditch is
responsible for a good deal of this.
In his books he accepts any story
he has heard without investigation.

The thing is now growing into a myth & wants investigating thoroughly. If I could only get a little more time, I think I could show the true state of the case, which is not by any means altogether to the discredit of the Settlers.

The little mother is well & cheerful. When I went up just now she was sitting in her old white arm chair with her spectacles on reading her text by the light of the candle lamp, with a most cheerful & contented countenance. Except when she has the fits of indigestion after meals I think she feels for the most part very well.

She sent the usual messages, but had nothing more to say about her promised letter to you.

Kind you keep all the 2½ stamps - They are valuable.

I feel that I have exhausted all my news, and am very tired & ready for bed. You must forgive this shabby letter; as you said once, you can't always have a letter full of plums, but must be content with dry bread at times. I suppose the latter is the most wholesome for you.

We all complain that you tell us so little about your work. Has the great Courtis deigned to speak a word of commendation? Are all the students English, American, & so forth? ~~Are~~ Are there no native French? You tell us nothing at all about their ways.

Accept my blessing, & when you get to London tell us your plans. I suppose you will want a draft for your passage money soon. Your devoted brother *Wm*